



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Tennessee—Rural Utilities Service

# Regional Collaboration

## *NanoZoo Connects!* delivers interactive science and math curriculum to students & teachers.

### Outline Of Need:

Teachers in rural schools struggle to develop science and math programs that challenge and fully engage students. The Memphis Zoo, partnering with Jackson State University in Mississippi, has developed an interactive curriculum popular with students and teachers. However, schools and the Zoo lack funds to provide recurring transportation or to connect rural schools to the learning center via Internet.

### How Rural Development Helped:

Rural Development Specialist Terry Kokinda helped the education and IT staff at the Memphis Zoo successfully apply for a \$500,000 Distance Learning grant cover the cost of equipment needed to connect the Zoo's learning center with classrooms at 14 schools in 4 counties across Tennessee.

### The Results:

Soon, students and teachers in Tennessee will have the opportunity to explore how scientists solve engineering and technological problems using



*Zoo staff show off one of the animals with biological traits that scientists are mimicking to solve problems for humans.*

nano-technology to mimic the special traits of animals and plants thanks to the Memphis Zoo *NanoZoo Connects!* initiative.

Rep. Steve Cohen said, "If we are going to successfully compete in a rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> Century global economy, our children must have the necessary tools to get ahead. The *NanoZoo Connects!* Program will help us accomplish such a goal."

Mississippi's Jackson State University is a leader in nano research and will provide technical expertise and the interactive presentation materials to be used in the curriculum.

"USDA is proud to be part of the partnership extending this cutting-edge educational opportunity to hundreds of students and teachers," said RD State Director Bobby Goode. "Working together, we will out-innovate, out-educate and out-build the rest of the world."

## Fast Facts

**Program:** Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program

**Investment:** \$500,000

**Impact:** 14 schools in Houston, Lauderdale, Lawrence and Monroe Counties linked with an innovative, interactive STEM curriculum.